

February 1, 2021

Honorable, David P. Hinkins
Senate Chair
Natural Resources, Agriculture,
& Environmental Quality Appropriations
Subcommittee

Honorable, Stewart E. Barlow
House Chair
Natural Resources, Agriculture,
& Environmental Quality
Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Senator Hinkins and Representative Barlow,

Re: Support for Request for a one-time non-lapsing appropriation – Analyses- Agricultural Lands Linked to the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem and Return Flows

Bear River Canal Company (BRCC), through its Board of Directors, expresses its support for the one-time appropriation request for analyses pertaining to *Conserving Working Agricultural Lands Linked to the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem and Return Flows*.

BRCC is a non-profit mutual water company irrigating over 65,000 acres of land in Box Elder County, Utah and producing an estimated 60+ million in crops annually. Our shareholders include many different governmental institutions, corporations, waterfowl management areas and over 2,000 shareholding families. Using 126 miles of canals and a 900 cfs water right, we service the Bear River Delta stretching from Cutler Dam to the Great Salt Lake an area roughly 30 miles long and 15 miles wide.

Because BRCC's canals, water delivery operations, and lands we service have an important nexus to Great Salt Lake, and we recognize that balancing water flows and needs to avoid potential future adverse conditions at Great Salt Lake is in all of our interests. Therefore, we fully support efforts to better understand the relationship between agriculture in the vicinity of the lake and agriculture's contribution to the lake and its ecosystem, including efforts to explore and analyze ways to maintain and conserve working agriculture lands in the vicinity of Great Salt Lake and its wetlands.

As the recommendations in the 2020 Great Salt Lake HCR10 Steering Group Report point out, agricultural lands provide benefits to the lake and surrounding habitats, whether through return flows or even surrogate habitat for migratory birds that feed in fields near Great Salt Lake.

The analyses proposed in the appropriations request, also are consistent with 2019 Concurrent Resolution to Address Declining Water Levels of the Great Salt Lake (HCR10). The Resolution provides in part, that *"the Legislature and the Governor recognize there is a need for an overall policy that supports effective administration of water flow to Great Salt Lake to maintain or increase lake levels, while appropriately balancing economic, social, and environmental needs, **including the need to sustain working agricultural land.**"* (Emphasis added.)

We fully support and hope to see adequate funding provided by the State of Utah, as sought, and for the purposes described in the request for appropriation for analyzing ways to conserve agricultural lands connected with the Great Salt Lake ecosystem.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Nielson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Trevor Nielson
General Manager
Bear River Canal Company

cc: Members of the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations
Subcommittee

Representative Timothy D. Hawkes